

FACT SHEET

U.S. Tuna Tracking and Verification Plan

The U.S. plan for tracking and verifying the dolphin safe or non dolphin-safe condition of tuna caught in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP) by purse seine vessels with carrying capacities over 400 short tons has changed. The new system is based on keeping the dolphin-safe tuna separated from the non-dolphin safe tuna from capture through processing. U.S. regulations require that dolphin-safe tuna be stored only in designated dolphin-safe storage wells aboard purse seine fishing vessels, and non-dolphin safe tuna will be stored only in designated non-dolphin safe wells. Dolphin-safe and non-dolphin safe tuna will be kept separated and identified by well number throughout the unloading and transshipping to weigh in, storage, and canning at processing plants. Only in restricted, recorded, and supervised use may mixed wells be used for tuna storage.

Every U.S. purse seine tuna fishing vessel greater than 400 short tons carrying capacity must have an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) observer aboard the vessel to oversee every fishing trip in the ETP. In addition to other duties, the observer will record information on Tuna Tracking Forms (TTFs) every time the purse seine net is set on a school of tuna. One TTF will be used to record information concerning each dolphin-safe set, and another TTF will be used to record information on each set in which dolphin are seriously injured or killed. The information recorded after each set will include: date and time of the set; well number; dolphin-safe or non-dolphin safe status of the set; estimated weights of yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye, and other fish caught in the set; comments if any, and initials of the observer and the chief engineer of the vessel. At the end of the trip, the observer and the vessel captain will sign the completed forms certifying that the TTFs are complete and accurate to the best of their knowledge.

The Fisheries Service will be notified of the location and expected time of arrival of all U.S. vessels completing fishing trips in the ETP. A Fisheries Service representative will meet the vessel at the dock to oversee offloading if there are any non-dolphin safe tuna on board. If the entire catch is dolphin-safe, the Fisheries Service may or may not meet the vessel at the dock. Instead, the IATTC observer may be asked to mail the TTFs to the Fisheries Service within five working days of the end of the trip.

Receiving Reports

U.S. processors will be required to notify the Fisheries Service of all expected deliveries of ETP tuna landed in the United States and to provide a copy of the processor's receiving report to the Fisheries Service representative, if present. If a Fisheries Service representative is not present, the processor must submit a copy of the processor's receiving report to the Fisheries Service by mail or fax within five working days. The processor's receiving report must contain, at a minimum: date of delivery, catcher vessel name and flag, trip number and dates, storage container number(s), dolphin-safe or non-dolphin-safe designation of each container, species, fish condition, and weight of tuna in each container.

Monthly Submissions

U.S. processors will be required to submit two monthly reports of processing activity containing the following information: (1) the amounts of ETP-caught tuna that are removed from cold storage including the date of removal; storage container number(s); dolphin-safe or non-dolphin-

safe designation of each container; details of the disposition of fish (for example, canning, sale, rejection, etc.); and (2) a report of all tuna received at U.S. processing facilities in each calendar month whether or not the tuna is actually canned or stored during that month.

Duplicate monthly cannery receipt reports must contain the following information: species, condition (round, loin, dressed, gilled and gutted, other); weight in short tons to the fourth decimal; ocean area of capture (e.g., eastern tropical Pacific, western Pacific, Indian, eastern and western Atlantic, other, etc.); catcher vessel; trip dates; carrier name; unloading dates; and unloading location.

Certificates of Origin

All tuna products except fresh tuna, that are imported or sold into the United States must be accompanied by a properly certified Fisheries Certificate of Origin (FCO) (NOAA Form 370) . The FCO has been revised to reflect changes in the law and the requirements of the International Dolphin Conservation Program. As in the past, documents certifying the dolphin-safe status of the imported tuna will be required.

Dolphin-safe Verification

Verification procedures for all required information submissions have been included in the new regulations. The United States may verify fishing reports by the use of IATTC data, and verify processor or importer reports by reviewing company records. Random purchases of canned tuna in various locations around the country will be made on a regular basis. Tuna cans will then be traced back through processing and ultimately capture to verify the dolphin-safe condition of the tuna.

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